

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY L/AFP:LGFIELDS,JR:NMC

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ARA/AND/B: - R. PACE

SCS - F. STEVENS

ARA/AND/B: - R. PACE

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TO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056611

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:SNAR, CASC, BL

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA

REFS: (A) LA PAZ 1857; (B) LA PAZ 1863

1. DEPT IS GRATIFIED TO LEARN OF ESCALATING LEVEL OF INTEREST IN AMERICAN PRISONER PROBLEM AS REFLECTED IN REF A AND IS HOPEFUL THIS INTEREST WILL CONTRIBUTE TO PROMPT RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM. MOREOVER, AMBASSADOR'S INITIATIVE IN RAISING LEVEL IN APPROPRIATE AND USEFUL WAYS IS APPRECIATED.

2. IT IS HOPED RODENBERG NOW HAS BEEN MOVED TO CLINIC AND THAT BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT IS FOCUSING ON PROBLEM OF TREATMENT FOR GOLDMAN. DEPT IS SYMPATHETIC TO GREATER RISK ASSOCIATED WITH MOVING GOLDMAN TO LESS SECURE FACILITY,
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HOWEVER, PRIMARY CONCERN IS AND SHOULD BE HIS WELFARE AND HEALTH. DESPITE HELPFUL OBSERVATION OF CONSUL ON CYCLE OF GOLDMAN'S BEHAVIOUR, MOSCOWITZ TEAM IS PERSUADED THAT GOLDMAN HAS PERSONAL AND URGENT NEED FOR MEDICAL ATTENTION. HIS STATEMENTS TO TEAM MEMBER FIELDS AND VICE CONSUL CANNOT BE DISMISSED NOR CAN ANY UNREASONABLE RISKS BE TAKEN WHERE

THIS MAN'S HEALTH IS CONCERNED. AN UNTOWARD INCIDENT CAN ONLY SERVE TO INFLAME SITUATION AND BE DETRIMENTAL NOT ONLY TO PRISONER PROBLEM BUT COULD IMPACT ON MUTUAL INTERESTS AND PROGRAMS.

3. ASSISTANT LEGAL ADVISER FIELDS WAS CONTACTED LATE LAST EVENING BY COLUMNIST JACK ANDERSON WHO HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED BY PARENTS ON DEVELOPMENTS. HE SOUGHT INFORMATION ON TEAM'S FINDINGS. FIELDS URGED THAT ANDERSON USE RESTRAINT IN PUBLISHING ALLEGATIONS MADE BY PARENTS, ESPECIALLY ON ISSUE OF ALLEGED TORTURE OF AMERICAN PRISONERS. HE ADVISED ANDERSON THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS WERE UNSUBSTANTIATED IN INTERVIEWS HELD BY TEAM WITH ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS IN BOLIVIA. MOREOVER, FIELDS REFUSED TO DISCUSS CONTACTS MADE WITHIN BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT EITHER THERE OR IN WASHINGTON WITH RESPECT TO ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE PROBLEM. DESPITE THIS IT WAS APPARENT TO FIELDS THAT ANDERSON WAS IN POSSESSION OF GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO CONTACTS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE. ANDERSON WAS AWARE, FOR EXAMPLE, OF APARICIO'S MEETING IN WASHINGTON AND EFFORTS TO ABORT HIS VISIT. FIELDS NEITHER CONFIRMED OR DENIED CONVERSATION WITH APARICIO IN WASHINGTON BUT INDICATED THAT TEAM HAD MET WITH APARICIO IN BOLIVIA. HE FURTHER STATED THAT APARICIO WAS ATTENTIVE TO AND INTERESTED IN USG CONCERNS AND WAS, IN OPINION OF TEAM, DESIROUS OF BEING HELPFUL TO ACHIEVE A JUST SOLUTION. FIELDS STATED HE HAD OCCASION TO DEAL WITH APARICIO OVER PERIOD OF MANY MONTHS AND REGARDED HIM AS ONE OF MOST EFFECTIVE NARCOTIC ENFORCEMENT LEADERS IN ALL OF LATIN

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AMERICA. HE STATED THAT ANDERSON WOULD HAVE TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY REDUCTION IN APARICIO'S ZEAL AND EFFECTIVENESS WHICH COULD RESULT FROM SENSATIONAL PUBLICITY REGARDING HIS PERSONAL ROLE IN THIS MATTER OR ANY ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE OR ABUSE. MOREOVER, ANDERSON WAS WARNED THAT SENSATIONAL NEWS COMMENT AT THIS TIME COULD AFFECT DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS UNDER WAY TO RESOLVE PRISONER PROBLEM AND HE ALSO MUST BEAR ANY RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS CONNECTION.

4. ANDERSON TICKED OFF SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF ALLEGED TORTURE, I.E., BEATINGS WITH RUBBER HOSES, PLACING PRISONERS IN RAT INFESTED ROOMS, DEPRIVATION OF MEDICAL ATTENTION RESULTING IN SEVERE WEIGHT LOSS BY ONE PRISONER DUE TO AGGRAVATED DYSENTERY AND A NUMBER OF OTHER EPISODES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE. AS PREVIOUSLY STATED, FIELDS DENIED THAT THE TEAM FOUND ANY EVIDENCE OF ALLEGED TORTURE AND THAT ALL PRISONERS APPEARED TO THE TEAM TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF CERTAIN DENTAL AND MINOR MEDICAL

NEEDS. HE INDICATED THAT THESE NEEDS WERE BEING ATTENDED TO AND THAT ONE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RESPECTIVE DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH AND DENTAL CARE STANDARDS IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES.

5. IN RESPONSE TO ANDERSON'S QUESTIONING ON ISSUES OF DELAYED JUSTICE, FIELDS POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE CONCERNS IN BOLIVIA OVER HARSH PROVISIONS OF OLD NARCOTIC LAWS AND HOPES FOR AMELIORATION IN RECENTLY PUBLISHED NEW LAW. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONING CONCERNING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN OLD LAW, FIELDS CITED REQUIREMENTS OF SINGLE CONVENTION AND INTEREST OF BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENT IN INTERNATIONAL NARCOTIC CONTROL EFFORTS. HE DENIED ANY UNDUE INFLUENCE EXERCISED BY U.S. BY PROMULGATION OF EARLIER LAW AND STATED THAT THAT LAW WAS NOT GROSSLY OUT OF LINE WITH EITHER U.S. LAW OR THAT OF OTHER SINGLE CONVENTION STATES PARTIES. HE CITED IN-

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STANCES IN WHICH SOME DOMESTIC STATE LAWS IN U.S. CONTINUE TO CARRY PENALTIES OF UP TO FORTY YEARS FOR POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA. HE ALSO CITED OTHER HARSHER LAWS OF NATIONS AND STATED THAT EARLIER BOLIVIAN LAW WAS FAR FROM MOST SEVERE IN WORLD. ANDERSON APPEARED TO BE IMPRESSED BY THIS FACT AND HAD NOT OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERED HEAVY SENTENCES METED OUT BY SOME STATE COURTS IN U.S. WHEN CONSIDERING THIS OVERALL PROBLEM.

6. COMMENT; WHILE FIELDS WAS NOT COMFORTABLE IN TALKING WITH ANDERSON ABOUT THIS DELICATE PROBLEM, HE FELT THAT SCURRILOUS CLAIMS COULD NOT GO UNDENIED AND THAT SOME REASONABLE COMMENT SHOULD BE MADE TO PLACE THE ISSUE IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT THRUST ANDERSON'S COLUMN WILL TAKE; HOWEVER, IT IS ANTICIPATED ANDERSON WILL BE RUNNING SOMETHING IN NEAR FUTURE DESPITE VIGOROUS EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES OF A SENSATIONAL NEWS COVERAGE AT THIS STATE OF OUR BILATERAL EFFORTS. DR. FARMER HAS BEEN CONTACTED AND INFORMED OF ANDERSON CONTACT AND ADVISED THAT RESPONSIBILITY OF SENSATIONAL EXPOSE MUST BE CLEARLY BORNE BY PARENTS GROUP AND JACK ANDERSON. DR. FARMER WAS TOLD DEPT AND EMBASSY WERE DOING ALL THEY REASONABLY COULD DO TO ADVANCE INTEREST OF THESE PRISONERS AND EFFECT A PROMPT RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM. THE DANGER OF GOING PUBLIC ON THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND INDEED THE CONDUCT OF BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT WAS CAREFULLY EXPLAINED BUT PROGNOSIS FOR NON-PUBLICATION REMAINS IN DOUBT. DR. FARMER STATED THAT HIS

UNDERSTANDING FROM AN ANDERSON ASSOCIATE WAS THAT PROJECTED ARTICLE WILL BE "HELPFUL" AND NOT EXTREMELY ADVERSE TO

EITHER GOB OR DEPT. AGAIN, ONLY TIME AND PUBLICATION
WILL ANSWER OUR CONCERNS AND WE HOPE THAT DR. FARMER'S
INFORMATION IS ACCURATE. END COMMENT

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